



STATE OF IDAHO

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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NEWS RELEASE

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ISDA ASKS FOR PUBLIC'S HELP TO IDENTIFY, DETERMINE DISTRIBUTION OF NEW SNAIL PEST

(BOISE) The Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) is asking Idahoans to check their gardens, yards and plants for the Brown Garden Snail, which has been recently discovered at the Idaho Botanical Garden in Boise. The snail may have been spread to other areas of the state including Boise neighborhoods and other urban centers of Idaho.

The snail, first introduced from France in the 1850s, is considered an invasive species and is on a department quarantine list. The snail will feed on a wide variety of plant species. A reproductively-active snail can produce upwards of 200 eggs. The snail is so destructive that it costs the state of California up to \$10 million a year in agricultural losses and control measures. The Idaho State Department of Agriculture is asking for the public's help to locate snail infestations.

"These snails are very destructive. They chew holes in fruit, leaves, flowers and other plant parts," said ISDA entomologist Ben Simko. "With the public's vigilance, we hope to identify how widespread the infestations are in the state."

Shrub beds, ground cover and vegetable gardens are popular places for the snails, which are active at night and prefer the shade of large vine plants such as pumpkin and squash. Their presence can often be detected by plant damage and thin slime trails (versus a thicker slim trail often left by slugs.)

A mature snail can measure up to 1 ½ inches in diameter.

Safe control of the Brown Garden Snail is possible using products containing metaldehyde or iron phosphate. Home gardeners can purchase both products at home improvement, landscaping and garden stores. Homeowners are advised to always read and follow pesticide label instructions.

Handpicking of the snail and setting of traps are also good ways to control garden infestations. However, because the Brown Garden Snail can be similar in appearance to some native Idaho snails, the department is asking anyone who finds a snail that they suspect is a Brown Garden Snail to contact the department for identification.

Additionally, the department is asking anyone who may have taken potted plants or soil from the Idaho Botanical Garden in the last 5 years to contact us, as the snails or their eggs may have traveled with this plant material, further distributing the snail population. The Idaho Botanical Garden is working closely with the department to help survey for and prevent the pest's spread.

The department can be contacted at (208) 332-8620.

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